To the Students at the Princeton Theological Seminary, Edinburgh. New College 30 Nov: 1850

Beloved brethren, The correspondence which during several years was carried on so pleasantly between us, has we find for some seasons been suspended, owing probably to the removal from our halls, to scenes of more active labour, of those to whom the continuance of it was more immediately entrusted. But although this cessation has taken place, it appears to us that there are many circumstances rendering it so becoming and desirable, that a friendly and brotherly intercourse should continue to exist between us, that we feel constrained to do our part towards its renewal, even after so lengthened an interval as has occurred. To all students throughout the Churches of the living God, do we feel our affections and sympathies drawn out, but to none if you will permit us to say so, more than to you, to whom we feel as if united by ties of no ordinary intimacy, although separated by a diameter of the globe, and with the wide waters of the atlantic rolling between us. You dear brethren we regard as occupying that position in the New world, which it is our privilege to hold here. The noble institution to which you have the honor to belong, and which is identified with such distinguished names, both in past and present times, we cannot but regard with peculiar interest, as one of the grand bulwarks of Protestant, and Scripture truth, in these days of defection & error, and yourselves as that chosen band, who are one day in the good providence of God, to sally forth as the champions of the cause of Christ to carry the tidings of salvation to thousand, and tens of thousands, both at home and abroad. While blessed be God, there are many every where throughout the world, whom we can welcome, and bid God speed as brethren in the bonds of the Gospel, to you our thoughts turn with peculiar regard, as to those whose existence is not only a standing testimony, to the unity of Spirit which pervades, and characterizes the Protestant Church in every land, but also to the fulness and sufficiency of divine revelation, in all that concerns not merely the great doctrines bearing more immediately on the salvation of the soul, but also in regard to the leading principles, affecting the nature Constitution, and administration of the Church of the living God; seeing that notwithstanding the innumerable points of difference in our outward circumstances, and the distance at which we are separated from each other,

The light which was kindled at the Reformation, and which for some time continued to burn so brightly, being gradually overlaid and extinguished, by the progress of ungodliness and superstition. Large masses of our fellow countrymen becoming sunk in a state of practical irreligion, dreadful in its present aspects, and the consequences of which even in a social & political view, it is fearful to contemplate, not to speak of the more awful form it assumes to the mind of a Christian. Side by side with this, we find an advancing tide of Popery too long believed to be effete and powerless, as if acquiring fresh vitality in old age, and if it were possible, seeking to deceive the very Elect of God, drawing into its vortex from the midst of our Protestant Churches, men who if they were not among the foremost asserters of scripture truth, would yet on account of their learning and intellectual vigour, have been deemed likely to be among the last to submit themselves to the Roman bondage. Add to these, a wide diffusion of a spirit of Rationalism, Infidelity, the twin sister of superstition, and we have something like a description of the state of matters at home. Abroad, among heathen nations long fettered by superstition there is change. A breaking loose from the entanglements of old systems - a general opening for the preaching of the gospel, and noble opportunities on every hand of entering in, to conquer nations to the power of the truth as it is in Jesus. And if such is a correct view, of the aspects which the world at present now presents to the eye of the Christian, surely two great duties are pressed upon the consciences of all, and especially of those who would aspire to be the ambassadors of God. The duty viz. on the one hand as regards Christendom, of rolling back the tide of ignorance and superstition which is advancing so rapidly upon us, as threatening unless arrested in its course, to carry desolation and destruction well on interests whether civil or religious. With such danger impending over us, shall there be found among us no champions to go forth in the

name of the most high God, to raise a standard against the advancing flood? and then in regard to the foreign field - It is true that old superstitions are giving way, under the advancing influence of literature & science, but is it not true at the same time, that while we are inactive, the Enemy is at work sowing tares in the field, inculcating a cold and desolating infidelity, or forging new chains of soul destroying error; so that unless the grace of God prevent, the last state of these nations may be worse than the first.

And have we no responsibilities in regard to them? While they are in darkness is the lamp of life not burning in our dwellings, and have we not known the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ who came to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him?

Of ourselves we have not much to communicate. We have this session by the good providence of God, been permitted to begin our studies under circumstances of much greater external advantage than in any previous year, in consequence of the completion of the building of the New College. This Edifice was projected at the era of our Church's disruption, by a distinguished individual who was Moderator of our General Assembly on that memorable occasion, and whose name as a writer on Ecclesiastical history is perhaps not unknown among you. We allude to the late D. Welsh. He indeed, after for a short time discharging the duties of a professor, was taken to his rest, and not permitted to see the completion of the undertaking, and was followed some years later, by the Principal of our Theological faculty Dr. Chalmers, whose name we merely deem it necessary to mention. Of the shock thus inflicted not only on our infant institution, but also on the Church in which they held so prominent a place, we shall not attempt to speak, but simply say that the vacancies thus produced have been since supplied, and we are now under the care & instruction of men in whose judgement, learning and piety, we have every reason to confide, and for the benefit of whose oversight, we shall have a large account to give.

Our Missionary Association holds its meetings weekly, on the Saturday mornings. To these meetings, under the blessing of God, do we look for having our zeal and devotedness strengthened, and expanded, and for furnishing us with information, fitted to direct our minds, in reference to the concerns of Christs kingdom whether at home, or abroad.

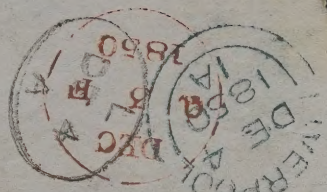
Our actual results in the way of efforts for the advancement of the cause of the Gospel are indeed meagre. The enclosed report will furnish you with an account of our doings during last Session, as well as what we propose for ourselves during the ensuing one. We wish we could point to a more flourishing state of things among us, and trust that the temporary sojourn in Scotland, of the foreign Missionary of our Church Dr. Duff, may be blessed as a means, of impressing us with a deeper sense of our past shortcomings, and of stirring us up to greater ardour & zeal, in the cause of souls, a cause which as it was deemed worthy of the blood of the Lord of glory, is surely worthy of all that our poor labours & affections can bring to bear upon it.

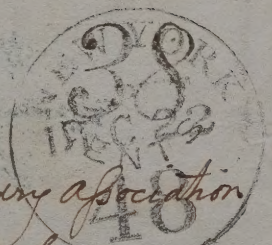
It will give us much pleasure to hear from you at your convenience - Meanwhile Commending you to God & the word of his grace - We remain, Yours very Truly -

In name of the New College Missionary Association

Robert G. Balfour, President -

Alexander Brown Secretary





To the,
President of the Missionary association
of the Theological Seminary
Princeton, New Jersey
United States.